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## In a positive direction



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Samir Rehem, who went to high school in Welland, is pictured directing Zach Gallifianakis in Kevin Drew's music video for You in Your Were. See story on page 2.

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# UPFRONT

■ TV AND FILM: Director Samir Rehem

## Fonthill native behind top 10 music video

GREG FURMINGER  
QMI Agency Niagara

It was during a barbecue in the Los Angeles backyard of bearded comedic actor Zack Galifianakis that Pelham native Samir Rehem would embark on a journey that would end up with him having directed the best 10 Canadian music videos for 2014.

The video for Kevin Drew's single *You in Your Wre* didn't go according to discussions that day, but what resulted when it was shot weeks later in a ballroom at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel turned into what Rehem calls "a charming personal moment" between actor and singer.

Speaking by phone from his Toronto home, Rehem recalls how Galifianakis had promised to come up with a dance routine for the day of filming. He never got around to it.

"He just made it all up on the day" of shooting, Rehem says of humorous scenes that portray the deadpan actor as a choreographer troubled by the song's awkward title.

"What the hell is that? It doesn't even make any sense," the funnyman says to Drew.

The comedic scenes are interspersed with the guitar-playing Drew, the frontman from Broken Social Scene, as the singer carries on with a duet with Feist.

Working in Hollywood is miles away for a Niagarawan who grew up attending St. Alexander School in Fonthill then later Notre Dame College in Welland.

Now 42, Rehem remembers always being involved in the arts and visual arts at high



SUPPLIED PHOTO

TV and film director Samir Rehem.

school. His guidance counselor encouraged him to pursue those interests, so he went on to study visual arts at York University. As his interest in film emerged, he moved on to Ryerson University, from where he graduated in 1983.

His first gig in the industry was as a production assistant, cleaning up, running errands.

As he became more hands-on, one year he found himself assisting with 60 music shoots.

"There was a vibrant video industry happening in Toronto in the '90s," he recalls.

His first "real job" — "it's a very tough business to get into," he says — was as an editor for both CityTV's *Fashion*

*Television* and *Movie Television*.

"It was 2006 when I really made my transition from editing to directing, when I did the film *The Answer Key*," he says of the urban fairytale.

It starred another Niagara native, Joe Pingue, a Ridley College grad also wrote the film and who has since gone on to may great things in front of the camera, and with whom Rehem had chummed on the playground before they went separate ways after Grade 6.

Rehem, he has no intention of ever stepping foot in front of the lens.

"It takes a very special person to be able to expose themselves in that way," he says.

As a director, he explains, his role is to critique actors, but while not offending them as they show their vulnerabilities to the camera. He takes pride in bringing sensitivity to his role of director, in making actors feel comfortable.

He jokes that that has something to do with his Catholic school upbringing at Notre Dame.

"Welland and Fonthill and Niagara is a huge part of my life. It has shaped me as the person that I am."

Over the past decade, Rehem has built a career in "teen television," directing for shows that include *Degrassi* and YTV's *Open Heart*, the latter for which he looks forward to a second season.

He's also directed on *Cock'd Gums*, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and *Kenny vs.*

### DIRECTOR SAMIR REHEM'S FILMOGRAPHY

#### Television

Open Heart (YTV/TeenNick)  
Degrassi (Much Music/CITY)  
This Hour Has 22 Minutes (CBC)  
The Next Step (Family Channel)  
Little Mosque on the Prairie (CBC)  
Skins (MTV US)  
Made: The Movie (MTV US)  
Pure Pawns (Showcase)  
Testees (FX Networks)  
Cock'd Gums (Showcase)

Kenny vs. Spenny (Showcase)

#### Film

Invitation (Feature)  
Parking Plot (Short)  
Don't Walk Out That Door (Short)

The Answer Key (Short)  
A Cure for Terminal Loneliness (Short)

#### Music video

You in Your Wre (Kevin Drew, featuring Feist and Zack Galifianakis)  
Good Sex (Kevin Drew)

*Spenny* and more.

The part he plays in Drew's *You in Your Wre* video stems from a friendship formed long ago with the singer.

They reconnected a few years back when Drew bought a loft down the hall from Rehem and his wife. Rehem hadn't directed a music video for 10 years, but after a few bottles of wine between old friends and new neighbours, he was recruited to direct the video for Drew's single *Good Sex*.

"It was a low-budget video — and it turned out great, so we figured we'd do it again."

For the second collaboration, Galifianakis tries to hijack Drew's production and turn it into a dance video.

Rehem volunteered his directing talent for a friend. Galifianakis was an acquaintance of Drew. Feist is a former romantic interest of

the singer. Galifianakis's wife is from Edmonton.

"We all just kind of clicked."

Bonding at that L.A. barbecue over all things Caanuk — the seed was planted for the music video.

Rehem was nominated for the Prism Prize for best Canadian music video of 2014. The award, however, was presented March 25 to Timber Timbre for the song *Beat the Drum Slowly*. The video was directed by Chad Vangalen.

Still, he can relish in having directed one of the best.

"I'm proud to be included in the top 10," Rehem says of the nominees list.

"That blows me away."

Not bad for a kid who used to climb the monkey bars at a school on Hwy. 20.

greg.furminger@summedia.ca  
Twitter: @gregatthehub

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# LOCAL NEWS

■ **FAMILY:** Benefit for terminally ill cancer patient Tanya Lafleur and her Welland family is this Saturday

## Prepared for the worst

GREG FURMINER  
QMI Agency Niagara

As 35-year-old Welland mom Tanya Lafleur courageously talks about the end of her life, she speaks calmly about the terminal cancer that has spread throughout her body.

The only time she chokes back tears is when she thinks of the future that will be left behind for her husband of seven years, Kevin, and their 17-month-old daughter, Magen, whose name was chosen when the couple honeymooned in Magen's Bay all those years earlier.

"I got a raw deal," Tanya says of her fate.

But she hopes her story can inspire other young families to be prepared for the worst.

Because her parents instilled in her long ago to have life insurance, and a will, she finds some comfort in knowing the man with whom she has a "rock solid marriage" and their little blessing will be taken care of when she's gone.

"If I didn't have life insurance before this, I wouldn't be able to get it," she says while advising others to get their ducks in a row.

"Just because you're young — anything can happen."

It was immediately following a hike with a large backpack last July that Tanya felt a pain in her side. She figured she had torn a muscle in her rib cage.

As we already know, it turns out it was much worse. A large mass was discovered by ultrasound. Following visits to the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton, it was determined the mass encompassed her diaphragm, it was attached to her liver, and her chest.

Cancer has since attacked her lymph nodes and other parts of her body, including her vertebrae.

"Unfortunately, it's a spreading case of one of the rarest forms of cancer you can have," Tanya says.

So rare, doctors haven't assigned it a name. Her medical reports call it "most unusual," and experts across North America continue to try to identify it.

"The cancer is going to kill me, it's just how and when."

Chemotherapy is not effective, so, to provide some form of pain relief, Tanya will be relying on palliative radiation treatment. It is hoped to give her more

### TO DONATE

An online fundraising account has been established at Go Fund Me.

Visit: [www.gofundme.com/kvt3k](http://www.gofundme.com/kvt3k)

freedom from the hospital bed in the living room of the family's Thorold Rd. E. home.

"I want to get up and move with her," she says of Magen, a little miracle who came after years of trying to start a family.

Tanya, who had been a law clerk and office manager at Elkin Injury Law in St. Catharines, had been the family's prime breadwinner, the "career mom." That was part of the Lafleur family plan. Kevin, 38, who works as a chef at Heatherwood Retirement Residence, also in St. Catharines, would play the role of a more hands-on dad in parenting.

Things were good. The house they bought before marriage has been restored, they planned to travel. But now they're struggling to pay the bills and the costs related to regular driving and care at Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. That's where friends come in.

A fundraiser for the Lafleures will be held this coming Saturday at Auberge Richelieu on River Rd. in Welland. Tickets are \$5 available at the door. It starts 7 p.m.

"We're doing this benefit to ease their financial burden," says event organizer Lynn Miner. "They're very good friends of ours."

So far, the community has donated more than \$25,000 in prizes.

What some people may consider to be little things have been of great help to the couple. Someone to baby-sit during a hospital appointment. Someone to do a load of laundry. Someone who has donated a gas card.

"It's just heartwarming," says Kevin.

"It restores your faith in the human spirit," he says of all that has been done to date and will continue this weekend. That, too, does bring tears to Tanya's eyes.

She grew up in a household that rallied behind charitable causes and fundraisers.

"It's always been about giving back to



GREG FURMINER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

A benefit fundraiser will be held this coming Saturday for Welland's Lafleur family — Kevin, 17-month-old Magen and Tanya, who has terminal cancer.

the community," she says.

"And I know Kevin's going to follow that through with Magen."

Now on the receiving end, she

considers herself "lucky" to have

a giving network of friends and family to keep her spirits up.

She looks forward to seeing

them Saturday.

[greg.furminer@summedia.ca](mailto:ggreg.furminer@summedia.ca)  
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Canadian Tire Montrose Rd  
April 24, 12pm-6pm

Lowe's McLeod Rd  
April 25, 10am-4pm



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## Open for business, or out to lunch?

DAVE AUGUSTYN  
For Pelham News

Last Wednesday, Niagara regional Chair Alain Caslin presented his first state-of-the-region address at a chamber of commerce luncheon in Niagara Falls.

"For far too long, we've had a sign in the window saying, 'out for lunch, back in an hour,'" said Caslin. "We must do better. Niagara must be 'open for business.' Under my leadership and the leadership of my council colleagues — Niagara is open for business."

Last Thursday, I tested his statement at regional council; unfortunately Council came up short.

First, Tim Clutterbuck, president of the Industrial Power Users of Niagara (IPUN), asked council to support their provincial lobbying efforts to reduce the cost of electricity for Niagara's largest industries. They find it exceedingly difficult to compete with the two-cent per kilowatt-hour automatic reduction for northern Ontario industries and with the cheap industrial power rates in western New York.

Since the region supported IPUN's similar proposal last year (as part of 2014 Niagara Week), I thought it would be a no-brainer to support its initiative now.

Instead, the majority of council voted to refer the matter to staff for a report sometime in May.

Later, council considered setting the 2015

tax rates and ratios.

When approving the 2015 budget in February, council accepted the premise that this year's tax increase would be \$27.50 (or 1.92%) for the average residential property valued at \$236,134.

But now, because of new assessment growth in commercial and industrial tax classes, staff calculated the final residential increase at \$22.42 (or 1.62%).

Councillors discussed this \$5.08 "benefit" two weeks ago and asked for options. Could we deliver half the benefit to residential property class owners — for a \$24.86 or 1.77% increase — and use the other half to help commercial or industrial businesses?

When I saw that one of these options would reduce the industrial tax burden by

1.34%, I proposed it to regional council. Since this type of reduction was exactly what the chamber of commerce suggested a few years ago and given the chair's "open for business" catchphrase the day before, I expected council to jump at this opportunity.

Instead, only Counc. Brian Heit, Andy Petrowski and I supported the idea. Perhaps the majority of council wanted to keep the "out-to-lunch" sign on the door and voted to study the option for 2016.

Some have used the "open for business" slogan at the region before. Maybe it's time to concentrate less on slogans and more on delivering results.

You may contact Dave May at [mayordave@pelham.ca](mailto:mayordave@pelham.ca) or read past columns at [www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com](http://www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com).



RENE BEAUCHAMP

Yanagi Maru is pictured at the Iroquois Lock in 1970.

## Shipwrecks — Yanagi Maru

SKIP GILLHAM  
For QMI Agency Niagara

**Y**anagi Maru was built at Imabari, Japan, and completed in April 1968.

The 123.4-metre-long carrier was diesel powered and able to handle 7,200 tonnes of cargo.

The Japanese flag freighter entered the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1970 but was much more at home on the Pacific Ocean and other saltwater routes.

It was sold and registered in Greece as Panagia in 1976 and in Malta as Makaris in 1990. Neither ship made it to the Great Lakes.

Makaris was on a voyage from Ashdod, Israel, to a Romanian port when fire broke out in the engine room while sailing the Mediterranean Sea between Cyprus and Crete on Aug. 1, 1991. The blaze was soon out of control and the crew abandoned the ship for their own safety.

The burned-out hull did not sink and was later taken in tow arriving at Piraeus, Greece, on Aug. 5. After being idle for several months, the ship was sold to Turkish shipbreakers. It was towed into Aliaga on Feb. 15, 1992, under the abbreviated name of Aris, and was broken up by Cukurova Celik.

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■ CHAIR ALAN CASLIN DELIVERS HIS FIRST STATE OF THE REGION ADDRESS

# 'Open for business'

RAY SPITERI  
QMI Agency Niagara

Niagara is open for business.

That's one of the key messages Niagara Regional Chair Alan Caslin delivered to fellow politicians and business leaders during his first state-of-the-region address last Wednesday afternoon at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls.

"Many of you own or run a business — if you were looking for a location for a new office that faced roadblocks in planning, zoning and permit decisions at every turn, you would no doubt take your business elsewhere," said Caslin.

"In the past, Niagara Region has been its own worst enemy by not supporting the flow of available investment into Niagara region.

"For far too long, we've had a sign in the window saying, 'Out for lunch, back in an hour'. We must do better. Niagara must be 'open for business.' Under my leadership and the leadership of my council colleagues — Niagara is open for business."

In an interview with reporters after his address, Caslin said while regional government doesn't create jobs, it can set the environment to attract businesses and help them expand in Niagara.

"I want to make sure that you get a yes before a no when you come to our door to want to do business in Niagara," he said. "We need business to create jobs, we need prosperity and we need it now."

Caslin said communities such as Barrie and Kitchener-Waterloo have seen a "more healthy expansion" than Niagara in recent years.

"We need to lay out an infrastructure of transit. We need to make sure that we have our government approvals and planning and development in place quickly. We need to be responsive to their financial needs — respectful of taxes, hold our development charges at bay."

"There's lots of things that we can do as a council."

He said it's "vitally important" that Niagara, as a council, work together to move the region forward.

"Think of the rowing scenario: If everyone is rowing in the same direction, you definitely get a lot more traction, a lot more distance and that's what we're trying to do right now. We're trying to make sure that we're respectful of everybody's position, but make sure that we all do what's right for our community instead of what's right for an individual interest."

During his address, Caslin said his priorities are to "move our people, move our performance and move our region forward."

He highlighted Niagara's ongoing push to convince the provincial government to approve daily, year-round GO train service through Niagara.

"We need it all the way to Niagara Falls. And we need a commitment this year," said Caslin.

In October, he said Premier Kathleen Wynne directed a Niagara delegation to come back to her with a detailed business plan for GO in the first quarter of 2015.

"I'm proud to say that we've completed the work, as requested, and that the Region is willing to put forward a significant investment in order to make this a reality."

"I am certain that having GO Transit to Niagara Falls will spur increased economic growth in the region."

Caslin, from St. Catharines, was elected chair by his peers over incumbent Gary Burroughs of Niagara-on-the-Lake prior to the first meeting of this term of regional council in December.

Wednesday's address was followed by a business roundtable with representatives from Niagara's chambers of commerce, local industry associations and Caslin. The roundtable allowed business leaders to discuss their specific issues and concerns.

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Twitter: @RaySpiteri



NIKE ORATTISTA/  
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Regional Chair  
Alan Caslin  
gave his  
first State of  
the Region  
address on  
last week at  
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## Yaroslav Diduch

Growing up in the Niagara Region, Yar has built strong ties to his community and possesses a passion for the people and the region where he calls home. Rooted in the Ukrainian community, Yar is fluent in the Ukrainian language. The focus of Yar's practice is on matters of family law, civil litigation, wills and estate matters.



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■ **EDUCATION:** Math numbers can go up

## DSBN beefs up academic plan

DON FRASER  
QMI Agency Niagara

District School Board of Niagara staff are in full-court press to boost student academic results, especially scores on provincially exams.

At a board meeting Tuesday, trustees heard a mid-year report on a plan for student achievement. Math is a particular focus in efforts that include professional learning sessions for teachers, instructional coaches, results benchmarking and support for students who need help.

Notable is a goal to have Education Quality and Accountability Board of Ontario (EQAO) scores in math in elementary and Grade 9 grades improve by 2% to 4% over a year.

Results from the board in that area have generally slipped below the provincial standard.

EQAO tests are done annually in each school across the province and measure reading, writing and math skills, based on a provincial standard.

"In my tenure here, I have never seen a year where we've had such a focus on math and literacy, and looking at the data we have and results we're trying to get," board education director Warren Hoshizaki said.

### IN THE REPORT

A DSNB staff report gives an update on the board's major capital new constructions and renovations.

Harriet Tubman School (St. Catharines): on target for September.

Twenty Valley School (Lincoln): on target for September.

Woodend Environmental Centre (NOTL): completed last month.

Crossroad School addition (NOTL): on target for September.

New West Fort Erie public school: on target for Sept. 2015.

"We know ... there are areas we need to work on, and that's why our focus is on these areas."

"This is the core of our work," Hoshizaki said of the improvement plan.

Trustees were also told the board has mostly seen steady gains in EQAO test results over five years.

Superintendent Helen McGregor said the report's goals overall are "well on their way" to being achieved.

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## RECREATION PROGRAMS & CLASSES

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Tuesday, April 7 7:00 – 8:00pm  
Wednesday, April 8 7:30 – 8:30pm  
Thursday, April 9 10:00 – 11:00am

### Walking Club - Everyone is welcome! - April 7 & April 9

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### PELHAM'S 11th ANNUAL

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- Egg Hunt starts at 11:00 am SHARP!
- for local children 12 years and under
- each participant is responsible for bringing their own basket to collect eggs
- a whistle will be blown at 11:00 am SHARP to announce the start of the hunt
- Stay for lunch, BBQ available
- shuttle to Arena available from Harold Black Park (953 Haislet Street, Fonthill)

Contact [jhendriks@pelham.ca](mailto:jhendriks@pelham.ca)  
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Friday, April 25, 2015  
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#### COMMUNITY CLEAN UP DAY

Saturday, April 26, 2015  
Residents can register at [pelham.ca](http://pelham.ca) or come to Centennial Park (999 Church Street, Fenwick) on Saturday, April 26 from 9:00am until noon to participate. A barbecue lunch will be provided.

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## Shall we dance?



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## MUSIC

# Welland singer's single cracks Billboard Top 40

JOHN LAW  
QMI Agency Niagara

Two months after launching her debut single, 17-year-old Welland singer Ashlynn Vince has cracked the Billboard Top 40 charts.

Hold on to Love, the polished pop song she recorded in Nashville last year, debuted last week at No. 37 on Billboard's Indicator Chart, placing her alongside Taylor Swift, Maroon 5 and Ed Sheeran.

"This is a big deal for a

first single from a new artist," says manager Tony Manior, who signed Vince to his Nashville-based label Plateau Music when she was 16. Originally a country singer, Vince switched gears for Hold on to Love, an infectious dance song straight out of the Cher/Believe mold.

But as she answers her cellphone last Friday, Vince doesn't sound like a pop star on the rise. She's keeping her excitement in check.

"I don't know how to

describe it," she says, on her way home from Centennial Secondary School. "I'm excited, but I feel I can't be 100% excited about it because I don't have gigs yet."

That happens after the second single, she's been told. To prove she's serious, she's already on it. In April she'll return to Nashville to record a followup single.

"It feels like I'm getting there," she says, looking back on a career that began at 12 singing at Fonthill's Urban

Steakhouse. "I love every minute of it."

Starting at 16, Vince made several trips to Nashville, where she was spotted by a recording engineer. That led to the deal with Plateau Music, whose stable includes Sam Austin, Bobby Wilson and Christine Padua.

While recording for weeks, she kept up at school with online courses.

Now that her foot's in the door, she's doubling down on her music career.

"I'm waiting," she says.

"Good things are happening but I'm just waiting for the next thing to happen. So while I'm waiting, I'm still in school!"

And while she's in school, she's still the same old Ashlynn to her friends. "They treat me the same," she says. "It would be weird if they treated me different."

Vince and her band Souled-Out plays The Urban Steakhouse (at Rice Rd. and Hwy. 202) April 2 at 9 p.m.

john.law@summedia.ca



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# LOCAL NEWS

## ■ SHIPPING: Port Colborne Mariners Celebration

### Prayers and fun usher in start of canal season

GREG FURMINGER  
QMI Agency Niagara

Regis Philbin's got nothing on Rev. Robert Hurkmans, who's a comedic hit with his game show *Who Wants to be a Mariner?*

The game show styled after the popular *Millionaire* trivia empire was one of the features during the hour-long Port Colborne Mariners celebration Sunday night, an annual affair that combines prayer for sailors and local marine industry with the start of the Welland Canal shipping season.

With John Maloney in the hot seat, Hurkmans quizzed the mayor on marine history, a clever way of shaking the background for the crowd that packed into St. James & St. Brendan Anglican Church.

For example, it was Franz von Papen who once plotted to blow up the canal, during the First World War.

A video question elicited laughs and groans when the smokestack of the Windsor was shown crashing into a prematurely lowered Allanburg Bridge in 2001.

The mayor guessed correctly to: What do you do with a drunken sailor? Don't return him to the Belmont. Yes, Maloney did use a couple of friends, including to phone a friend, the curator of the local museum, and he polled the audience for the million-dollar question: What was the name of the dog rescued on the Welland Canal Saturday?

It was a fun affair that also featured a dance number by the Port Colborne High School group FLOW, a bagpiper and a choir directed by Robert Wood.

But there was also time for reflection on the risks



PHOTOS BY GREG FURMINGER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

The Port Colborne High School dance team of FLOW performs to 65 Roses during Port Colborne's Mariners Celebration that champions the local marine industry and start of the Welland Canal shipping season.

that men and women take on the open waters.

For these people and their loved ones at home, prayers were offered.

"We thank you for all of the mariners, the sailors, for their skills upon the water that brings them in safety across the oceans of the world," Hurkmans said with head bowed.

The church at the corner of Charlotte and King Sts. was dressed to the nines for the event. Nautical flags were suspended above the choir and marine industry flags, including those of local shipping-related industries and businesses, lined the walls.

Both port and starboard lights shined at the front of the pew.

The canal, with the St.

Lawrence Seaway, officially opens Thursday.

Two Niagara top hat ceremonies are scheduled that day, at which head topers are presented to the captains of the canal's first downbound and upbound ships.

Port Colborne's downbound celebration starts 8:30 a.m. at Lock 8 Park. The upbound celebration takes place at the St. Catharines Museum Lock 3 complex starting at 10 a.m.

The April 2 opening of the canal is the first time since 1997 that ships aren't plying the waterway in March. The originally scheduled March 27 opening was pushed back because of the large

buildup of ice on the seaway and Great Lakes this winter. Said Maloney at Sunday's celebration: "We encourage all of you at the seaway to be careful."

greg.furminger@qmiagency.ca  
Twitter: @greg47heirb



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Hon. Paul J. Martin and Whitefish Bay await the start of the Welland Canal Shipping season on Sunday.

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Who Wants to be a Mariner, based on the *Millionaire* game show, was featured during Port Colborne's Mariners Celebration that champions the local marine industry and start of the Welland Canal shipping season.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## For the love of Niagara



GREG FURNBERG / TRIBUNE-STAR

J & J Florist owner Jack MacGregor has started selling a line of "I heart" hats, mugs and shirts featuring local municipalities' names including Pelham, Welland, Niagara Falls and St. Catharines from his Canboro Rd. W. business in Fonthill, which he says now doubles as an independent tourist information centre. All events organizers and businesses are invited to leave their promotional items there.

## ■ EDUCATION

# Niagara Catholic announces Award of Distinction recipients

QMI Agency Niagara

Former Lincoln County principal and Welland County school trustee, Joseph Noonan will be posthumously awarded Niagara Catholic District School Board's 2015 Education Award of Distinction this year.

Also receiving the award is Anna Racine, chairwoman of Niagara Catholic's special education advisory committee and a parent volunteer.

Noonan began his career in Catholic education in the 1950s, and spent the next 44 years committed to expanding Catholic education in Niagara. He went

door-to-door in Welland to convince Catholic ratepayers to direct their taxes to Catholic schools which were in need of financial support.

As a teacher, the board said in a news release issued Tuesday, he demanded high standards of his students. As a trustee, he was a frequent visitor in schools, speaking with students and staff so that he could better understand the issues he needed to bring to the board table.

He died in November 2007 at age 81.

Racine joined the Catholic school council at St. Thomas More Elementary School in Niagara

Falls when her son, now in university, was in senior kindergarten. Today she serves Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Michael High School as their liaison with the special education advisory committee, the parish and the community.

"Individuals like Ms. Racine and Mr. Noonan enrich our school communities in so many ways, whether it is as an educator, a trustee or as a parent advocate," said school board chairman Father Paul MacNeill.

Awards will be presented at the 12th annual Bishop's Gala, which will take place at Club Roma in St. Catharines April 10.

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# LOCAL NEWS

■ **WELLAND CANAL:** Facebook post leads to owner's identity within minutes

## Dog rescued on Lock 8

GREG FURMINGER  
QMI Agency Niagara

The tale of a two-year-old Siberian husky trapped on the Welland Canal in Port Colborne came to a happy ending. Within minutes of the story and photos about the troubled canine being posted on the *Tribune's* Facebook page Saturday morning, Star's owner was tracked down by friends.

Crystal Derragh's beloved companion wandered off from her Erie St. home, about a kilometre away, when she had slipped away to the store at about 8:30 p.m. Friday.

Welland and District Humane Society called for the assistance of Port Colborne Fire and Emergency Services just before 8:30 a.m. Saturday after Star was spotted in the snowy ice of the canal just south of Lock 8.

Despite rescue attempts by Port Colborne firefighters, it was hoped that Star would make her own way to higher ground.

The dog barked occasionally as it ran up and down the ice near the Great Lakes ship *Bala Comau*, which has been tied up in the canal over winter.

Firefighters put ladders down both east and west canal walls, and one tethered firefighter in a water rescue suit ventured onto the icy surface in hopes of luring the dog with treats.

"I was afraid of us," Port Colborne Fire Chief Tom Cartwright said of the canine.

The presence of firefighters along the canal banks, plus humane society officials and others, seemed to make the dog nervous, and the dogs would often run to other spots along the canal walls in search of an escape route.

Cartwright said firefighters didn't want to panic the dog into heading toward open water near the Clarence St. bridge.

So they grabbed construction mate-

rials from the fire hall just opposite from where the dog was trapped and fashioned a ramp. It was secured and dropped into the canal at a spot firefighters typically do their water rescue training.

Firefighters cleared the scene just past 9:30 a.m. having left the dog with the tools it needed to make it to freedom.

"He's relatively safe," Cartwright said. "We put lots of food down there, and hopefully she'll be able to find her own way out."

Well, as it turned out, when the story about the dog was posted to *The Tribune's* Facebook page, it took just minutes to catch the attention of Derragh's friend, Sharon McEwen.

"I saw it on Facebook and called (Derragh) right away," she said following a successful rescue.

As Derragh was choking back tears when approached by *The Tribune*, firefighters returned and led her toward the ramp they had left for Star.

Cartwright said it was "an unusual set of circumstances" that led firefighters to outfit Derragh with a life vest, safety harness, ropes and helmet to assist in getting Star reunited with her owner. She climbed the canal wall on a fixed ladder to a dock.

"We don't like to do these types of things, but we took all the safety measures involved," the chief said.

Firefighters, he said, could have spent hours trying to coax the dog to safety, but knew it could be done in short order with the owner.

"As soon as she went down, the dog came right to her."

The dog was leashed then led up the ramp by firefighter Mike Radzikowski.

Derragh said her dog was "exhausted" but otherwise in great shape after her ordeal.

"She's fine, she's happy she's with me now," she said before the dog gave her



GREG FURMINGER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Port Colborne firefighter Mike Radzikowski tries to gain the trust of Star, trapped in the Welland Canal, south of Lock 8 on Saturday in Port Colborne.

slippery kisses.

She was impressed by the swift Impact Facebook played in Saturday's reunion just before 12:30 p.m.

"Social media — just go, go, go," she said.



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## ■ SUNSHINE LIST

# Police, fire, profs lead \$100,000 list

**RAY SPITERI  
and RON FRASER**  
QMI Agency Niagara

Niagara Regional Police Chief Jeff McGuire was the top earner amongst regional employees last year.

There were 790 Niagara Region employees on the 2015 Ontario Public Sector Salary Disclosure List that includes the Niagara Regional Police and public health.

There were 602 members of the Niagara Regional Police on the list, with the top earner, McGuire, making \$297,082.03, plus \$32,445.09 in taxable benefits.

Last year, Niagara's medical officer of health, Valerie Jaeger, lead the way. But in 2014, she was the second highest-paid regional employee, making \$265,386.85, plus \$877.67 in taxable benefits.

McGuire said the NRP is not unlike other like-sized regional police organizations, in that front-line constables make around \$90,000.

"It doesn't take a lot for them to get on the list," he said.

McGuire said he supports a sunshine list, but it "needs to be indexed to what it's original intent was."

"If the \$100,000 thresh-

old were to be adjusted to today's dollar value of approximately \$145,000, there would only be 55 NRPS employees on the list of our just over 1,000 employees.

"I fully respect that all of these dollars are taxpayer dollars no matter where the line is drawn. I am a taxpayer also. I do believe the disclosure list would be much closer to its original intent if it were properly adjusted to reflect the value of today's dollar."

"I would also point out that the per-duty (off duty) earning of the NRPS officer have always been included in their salary disclosure numbers while some other agencies have been reporting that for the first time this year."

Cops, firefighters and health-care workers were among the top public-sector earners in Niagara, according to the so-called sunshine list released by the provincial government Friday.

Created in the 1990s, the list reveals the names and salaries of people working for the provincial taxpayer who earn \$100,000 a year or more. Making the list in 2014 were 111,438 public servants, up 14% or 13,474 employees, from the previ-

## SCHOOL BOARDS

Top earners at Niagara's two largest public boards were its directors of education.

Their salaries weren't far off, even though the District School Board of Niagara is larger than the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

Education director Warren Hoshizaki tops the DSNB at \$249,460, with no taxable benefits, while his counterpart at the Catholic board, education director John Crocco took home \$212,675, plus \$11,162.04 in taxable benefits.

In total, 216 made the list of top earners at DSNB and 112 were on it for the Catholic board. The big earners were almost all principals, and education superintendents.

Six of them topped \$150,000 at the DSNB and three of them passed that specific threshold at Niagara Catholic.

ous year.

The top earner at the Niagara Health System, which operates hospitals across the region, was director of

pathology, Dr. Suhas Joshi. Joshi made \$331,725.05, plus \$1,460.28 in taxable benefits. There were 189 NHS employees on the list.

As for municipalities, the city of St. Catharines said in a release that a pay period leap year meant an increase in the number of its employees on the list.

There were 27 pay periods for management employees, instead of the typical 26, according to the release. The additional pay period caused 12 management employees to surpass the \$100,000 threshold. This brought the total number of management employees on the list to 32.

In total, 112 city employees appear on the list.

Without the additional pay period, only 20 management employees would have been included on the list, a decrease of one when compared to the 2013 figures, according to the city.

There are also 74 members of St. Catharines Fire and Emergency Services, up from 48 in 2013.

The city said the increase is attributed to more overtime incurred by staff as a result of additional training and increased sick time.

The top St. Catharines earner was director of stra-

## COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES

Niagara College had 160 employees make the list, with six earning more than \$150,000. Brock had 365, with 31 surpassing \$100,000.

Brock's highest paid was its president, Jack Lightstone at \$333,576, plus \$10,660.83 in taxable benefits.

Niagara College president Dan Patterson made \$328,669.30, plus \$6,699.36 in taxable benefits.

At Brock, professor Martin Kusy came in at No. 2, pulling in \$273,127.97, plus \$552.60 in taxable benefits.

Brian Hutchings, vice president of finance and administration, was third at \$247,050.00, plus \$10,456.96 in taxable benefits.

Last year, Brock had about 550 names on the list and Niagara College had about 140.

Hutchings said of those that made the Brock list, 86% are faculty members and another 4% are members of Brock's senior administrative team and

counsel. Others hold management positions at the university.

Faculty raises will happen due to job tenure and as professors move up the rank and gather more experience, he said.

"We always compare ourselves to like-sized universities like Wilfred Laurier, Guelph and Windsor, and we're extremely comparable in salaries," added Hutchings. "In fact, on the senior administrative side we're a little bit less than those other universities in salaries."

Niagara College spokesperson Susan McConnell said the school "strives to be an employer of choice and continues to attract and retain employee talent needed to provide educational excellence and service to its students."

"(The college's) salaries and benefits are established following a strategy of fiscal responsibility and competitiveness," she said.

tergic initiatives Richard Lane. He made \$207,819.27, plus \$3,969.99 in taxable benefits.

The top fire department earner was fire chief David Wood. He made \$160,719.90, plus \$920.24 in taxable benefits.

There were 117 city of Niagara Falls employees on the list, about 100 from its fire department.

The city's top earner was chief administrative officer Ken Todd. He made \$175,315, plus \$663.85 in taxable benefits.

The top fire department earner was director of fire prevention Brian Dickson. He made \$152,551.25, plus \$574.32 in taxable benefits. Fire chief Lee Smith was second, making \$151,984.60, plus \$574.94 in taxable benefits.

"This year's Sunshine List is directly attributable towards three years of back for the last contract that was awarded — it was in 2014," said Smith, when asked why so many Niagara Falls fire department employees are on the list.

"It's for the period that we didn't have a contract have a contract, which ended in 2016. It's back pay for those years."

Of 40 City of Welland employees on the list, 23 work for the fire department.

The top earner was city manager Craig Stirtzing. He made \$162,023.85, plus \$6,452.95 in taxable benefits.

The top fire department earner was fire chief Denys Prevost. He earned \$140,890.37, plus \$969.57 in taxable benefits.

Niagara Parks Commission had 24 people on the list. General manager John Lohuis was the highest-paid employee with a salary of \$160,287.89, plus \$434.03 in taxable benefits.

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority had four on the list. Top was chief administrative officer and secretary-treasurer Anthony D'Amico, who has retired from the agency. He pulled in \$262,986.31, plus \$2,780.80 in taxable benefits.



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■ **EDUCATION:** Confederation secondary, Champlain elementary schools to amalgamate

# New French public school to be built

MARYANNE FIRTH  
QMI Agency Niagara

What do you get when you cross a Jaguar with a Shark?

The answer will be revealed within the next three years as their habitats are combined in Welland.

Conseil scolaire Viamonde announced last Friday that Confederation secondary school and Champlain elementary school will merge together in a new facility to be built in the coming years.

The Ministry of Education has awarded the French public board nearly \$11 million to construct a new school to house both the Jaguars and the Sharks.

The facility, for students in junior kindergarten to Grade 12, will be built on the existing Confederation grounds on Tangway Ave. in Welland.

Construction will take place beside the existing school, which will remain open while the build takes place. The aging building

will be demolished when the project is complete.

"For our students and the community, this is an opportunity to have a new school that will meet the needs of the area," said board trustee Derrick Fournier, a Confederation graduate.

The high school, built in 1966 and elementary school built in 1954 are two of the oldest facilities owned by the board. Champlain, on Afon Ave., was purchased by the board in 1981.

Now that the funding announcement has been made, the next step is to begin planning and creating the detailed design for the facility, said Claire Fournier, the board's director of communications.

A date has not yet been set for construction to begin, as it will vary depending on the coming planning process, she added.

It is expected to take 14 to 16 months to build the school, with an opening anticipated



MARYANNE FIRTH, QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Conseil scolaire Viamonde trustee Derrick Fournier announces construction of a new Welland school on Friday. The school will replace Confederation secondary and Champlain elementary schools.

In the next two to three years. The new school will house 350 students, but will be built to easily accommodate expansions if needed.

Confederation and Champlain have a current combined enrolment of about 250 students.

"It will be state of the art," Francoeur said of the new

building, which will be constructed with environmental efficiencies in mind.

This is the second school in the board that will have combined high school and elementary school students. Welland's new facility will be loosely modelled after the existing school in Pickering, but designed specifically to

meet local needs, Francoeur said.

"It has been successful and very well received by the community," Fournier said of école Ronald-Marion, which is in its second year of operation.

While the two groups of students will be under one roof, elementary and high school grades will be housed in dif-

ferent wings of the building, Fournier said.

"They'll be separated, but will benefit from the use of each other's facilities."

There will be opportunities moving forward, he said, for students, staff and the public to provide input on the project.

"For the francophone community, it's something that's very needed and deserved," Confederation principal Benoit Dussault said of the new facility.

"We've been waiting for this news for a few months and we're thrilled," he said, while adding the school will "bring new energy to the community."

Students from both schools came together in the Confederation auditorium for the announcement Friday and were later treated to special performance by French-Canadian pop group Ratfay.

maryanne.firth@summedia.ca  
Twitter: @mfrithVidme

# GIANT TIGER

## CALENDAR SALES IN SUPPORT OF WELLSPRING NIAGARA



(From left to right):

Mike Martin owner giant tiger FontHill, Caroline Therrien coshlec, Kelly Albanese my sister Phil Gaurloy Wellspring Niagara.

A couple of years ago my sister Kelly was diagnosed with stage four breast cancer. Her treatment required a double mastectomy, chemo therapy and radiation. During her treatment she used the services provided by Wellspring Niagara to help her cope both physically and mentally. She found this to be a invaluable part of her life during this difficult time.

When we decided to sell our calendars Wellspring Niagara was a obvious fit only because of my personal attachment but the town of FontHill has generously donated a parcel of land to Wellspring Niagara to build their permanent home. We sold 847 for a total donation of \$1694, giant tiger covered the cost of production of the calendar to ensure all of the funds our customers go we went directly to Wellspring.

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# LOCAL NEWS

■ **NIAGARA COLLEGE:** Dan Ghesling entertains Welland audience

## Big Brother star shines light on good leadership

GREG FURMINGER  
QMI Agency Niagara

Hayli Carpenter showed up for the motivational talk on effective leadership — but, truth be told, it was prime time for the *Big Brother* “superfan” to get close to the man who’s been called the CBS reality show’s best player of all time.

Dan Ghesling, winner of Season 10 and runnerup on Season 14, was at Niagara College Thursday night to give a talk based on his latest book, *Clean Your Own Mirror: 6 Necessary Duties to Lead and Influence People*.

Despite mostly wanting to get a personal glimpse of the dashingly 31-year-old, Carpenter said she walked away having been party to an engaging speech.

“It wasn’t normal textbook stuff,” said Carpenter, who was joined by her boyfriend, Frederick Brown, both of them who made the trip to the Welland campus from St. Catharines.

Calling Ghesling “talented” and “manipulative” on the show, Brown was curious about Ghesling in real life. “I wanted to see how much of a different person he was” off-camera, he said.

He wasn’t alone. Just more than 200 people shelled out \$5 apiece for tickets to see the man from the Detroit suburb of West Bloomfield, Mich., who now makes appearances at universities and colleges in Canada and the U.S. to speak about effective leadership, based on his experiences as an entrepreneur, successful TV contestant and football coach at Michigan State University.

His appearance Thursday was intimate. In a presentation peppered with celebrity and pop culture references, he managed to throw in a few Canucksians about Tim Hortons and Timbalts and the Apple Store in Toronto.

“When this is over, I promise, I’ll make you a better leader,” he said.

At the least, Ghesling quipped, he could help the

college students in the crowd become better daters.

And along that line, the first of the six “duties” he presented to becoming a great leader is “listen like it’s your first date.” In other words, be interested. He said listening to what others had to say was his TV success.

“I was using it to deceive people, but you can use it in your everyday life to help people.”

To that end, he told people to tweet out comments and photos of his visit, including his list of six duties, using #DanAING to reach people who didn’t attend his Welland visit.

His other duties to being a good leader: Actually give a crap; Be like a drive-thru, by always being open, including to criticism; Do not sink your own ship, by gossiping or failing to squeak it; Always be last, by putting your team members first and by spending time with the six types who tend to stay at the back of the line; and, lastly, Clean



GREG FURMINGER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Dan Ghesling, winner of U.S. reality TV show *Big Brother* 10 and runnerup of *Big Brother* 14, poses for a group selfie at Niagara College while giving a motivational speech on being an effective leader.

your own mirror, by being introspective and questioning about your leadership on a daily basis.

Ghesling started his talk with a definition: “A leader is a person who people actually

want to follow.”

He ended with a question-and-answer session with the audience. Most queries were about his reality TV past.

And for people now tuning in to the third season of

*Big Brother Canada*, Ghesling offered his take on which house guest he likes best so far, Jordan Patrick.

greg.furminger@sunmedia.ca  
Twitter: @GregAtTheRb

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